Saskatchewan
Education

Hon. Lorne H. Hepworth
Minister

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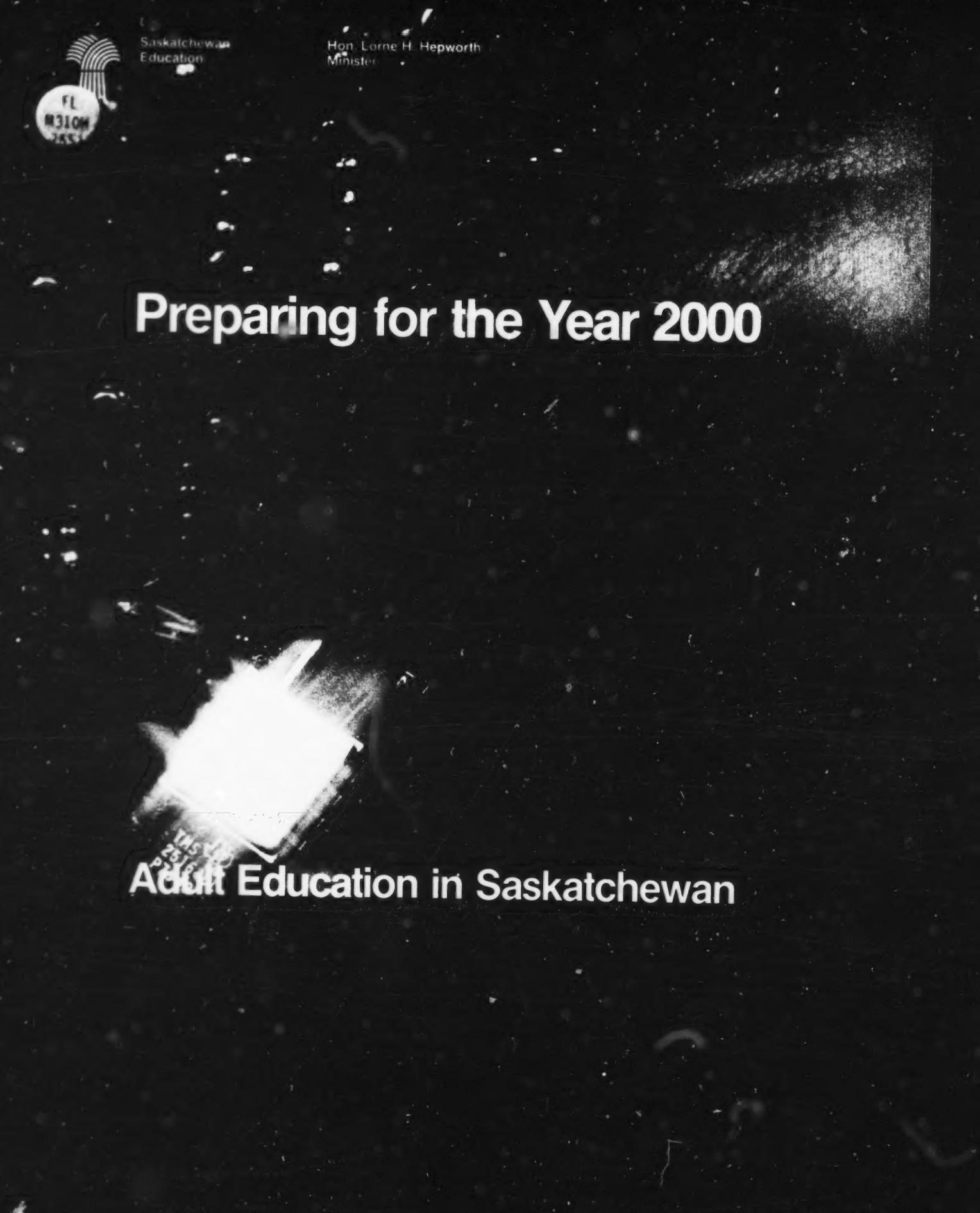
Preparing for the Year 2000



Adult Education in Saskatchewan

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Honourable Lorne H. Hepworth
Minister of Education

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Introduction

This document provides the policy framework within which the government wishes to pursue future developments in post-secondary education.

Recognizing that many parties share a partnership in adult education, this document does not seek to define a single course of action. Rather, it establishes some long-range policy objectives and goals around which institutions can co-ordinate their future plans. The document also provides details of the government's own plan of action for the next few years.

Historical Background

At the time of Confederation, responsibility for education was vested in provincial jurisdictions. As each province has developed along its own separate path, so the design and delivery of education has come to assume regionally distinct characteristics.

In Saskatchewan, the original founders of our education system had to deal with some unique challenges. Geographically, our population is widely dispersed, often in small communities separated by considerable distances. Socially, our population comprises a heterogeneous mix of aboriginal people and immigrants from Europe, Asia, and indeed every corner of the globe. Financially, we have always been dependent on an agriculture and resource-based economy, with the swings from boom to bust that this entails.

The beginnings of formal adult education in Saskatchewan occurred in 1879 with the founding of Emmanuel College in Prince Albert. In 1907, the University of Saskatchewan was established, with Emmanuel College as an affiliate. Following the formation of the University of Saskatchewan, there was limited expansion of the adult education system until the post-second world war era. With funding dependent largely on government revenues, the impact of the depression era left its mark.

After the war, a second phase of expansion began, in which the demand for skilled trades workers led to a rapid increase in technical and vocational training. Saskatchewan Technical Institute was established in Moose Jaw, followed by Kelsey Institute in Saskatoon and Wascana Institute in Regina. The University of Saskatchewan also underwent considerable growth during this period.

The third and most rapid phase of expansion, began in 1973 and has continued to the present. The community college system was introduced in 1973, with 15 colleges in locations across the province.

In 1974, the University of Regina was established as a separate university with its own charter.

In 1984, the Advanced Technology Training Centre was set up in Saskatoon, and in 1986, the Northern Institute of Technology opened in Prince Albert.

In the last few years, additional programs for specific target groups have been introduced. These include:

- The *Saskatchewan Skills Development Program,* which has provided $17 million in skill training to public assistance recipients.

- The *Non-Status Indian and Metis Program,* which assists native people in adult upgrading at a cost of $4 million per year.

- The *Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program,* which spends $4 million per year to provide institute training courses in rural areas.

- The *Northern Training Program,* which assists northerners in skill training and literacy upgrading, at a cost of $2 million per year.

This rapid expansion of programs has been accompanied in the last 5 years by an enormous increase in the number of people enrolled in courses. In 1986, fully 20% of the adult population was enrolled in publicly-funded adult education or training. In total, the province now spends over a quarter billion dollars per year in this field.

In addition to provincial programming, the federal government is now also a direct participant in adult education and training in the province. Mainly through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and the Department of Indian and Native Affairs, the federal government spends about $70M in Saskatchewan each year.

The private sector also plays an important role in skill training and upgrading of employees. It is estimated that approximately $200M is spent annually by companies in Saskatchewan on employee training and retraining.

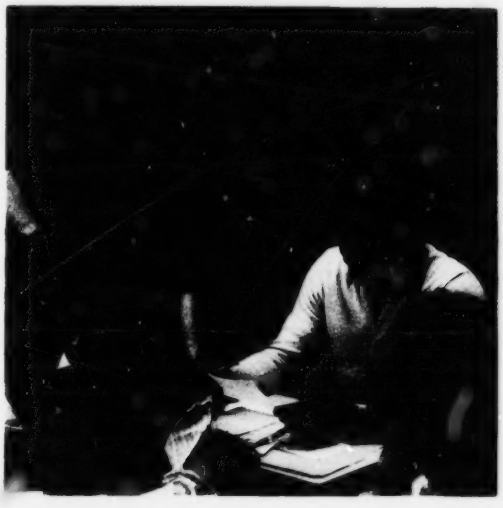
In total, adult education in Saskatchewan has grown into a $500M a year enterprise, with more than 30 publicly funded institutions involved, and many more private firms engaged.

Summary of Developments to Date

As this brief history indicates, adult education in Saskatchewan has evolved through a number of phases in response to social or economic conditions. The proven capacity of the adult education system to adapt is grounds for confidence that we will meet and master future challenges.

However, one of the basic premises of this policy document is that the next 20 years will see profound social and economic changes not only in Saskatchewan, but in Canada and across the globe. The sheer magnitude and rapidity of the changes confronting us requires that we plan and prepare in a concerted manner.

The following section discusses some of the challenges which will confront adult education over the next few years.



Emerging Social and Economic Trends

The New Economy

"The future of work will consist of learning a living".

Marshall McLuhan

It is common to read or hear today that the world has entered the *"Information Age"* or the *"Knowledge-based Economy"*. What is meant is that we no longer live in a mainly industrial society, where the creation of wealth depends on extracting, refining and processing raw materials. Instead, we are moving to an era where the creation of wealth depends more on technological research and the processing of information.

Nowhere in North America will the challenge posed by the shift to information technology be greater than in Saskatchewan. Historically, we have based our high standard of living on our rich endowment of natural resources. While these will continue to be important assets to us, it is becoming clear that they cannot alone sustain us in the future.

We must be prepared to make the shift to a knowledge-based economy. This can only be done by developing our human resources.

In a resource-based economy, some nations enjoy an advantage in raw materials. In the economy of the future, the basic raw material - human intelligence - can be found everywhere. The deciding factor will be education. This is a seminal fact as we prepare for the 21st century.

But there is more at stake than simply our economic well-being. The quality of our lives, and how we wish to lead them, is also at stake. We have always relied on our education system to reinforce our cultural values. We look to education as the basic civilizing force in our society. We rely on it to acquaint successive generations with the process of rational inquiry and the ability to communicate with precision and clarity.

This role must be intensified in the years ahead. For while the new technology offers many benefits, it also has the potential to undermine our social fabric. Perhaps the greatest area of risk lies in our ability to maintain the elegance and power of our language. If we allow the processing of information to become subordinated to an industrial assembly line, we risk the debasement of language itself.

To prevent this from happening, a conscious and forceful vigilance is required to constantly reaffirm the intrinsic value and beauty of language.

Although all of us share this responsibility, we must look to our education system for leadership in this critical endeavour.

The Greying of the Baby Boom

In the years after the war, servicemen returning to their homes, and young Canadians everywhere settled, married and began raising families. The resulting "baby boom" became a global phenomenon,

but Canada, with its young population, exceeded even this trend. As a nation, we have one million more members in our baby boom group than the international average would predict.

There have already been profound effects as the crest of this wave moves through successive age cohorts. The Kindergarten to Grade 12 system has felt the effect, as have the universities and colleges. Unemployment figures climbed as this group reached early adulthood, and the cost of government programming in the employment field soared. In the decades following the turn of the century, the impact will fall progressively on the health system, and later on pension and retirement programs.

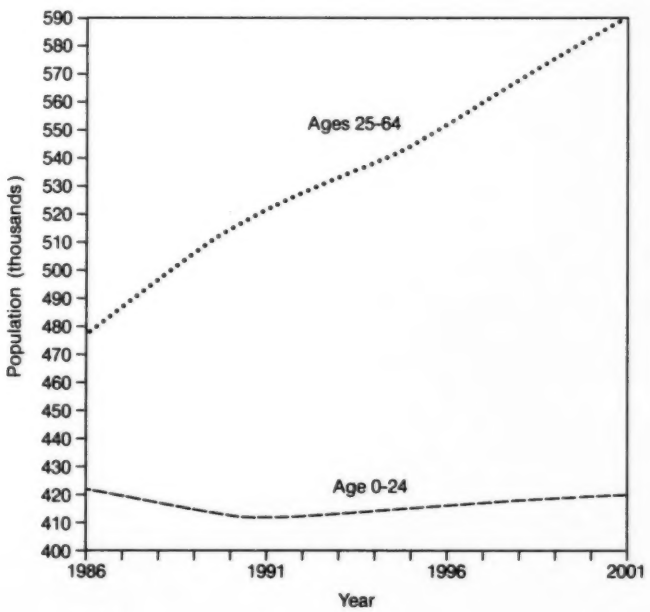
But for the next twenty years, the baby boom will be in the 35 to 50 year old, mid-career bracket. The majority of the group were trained before the main impact of the new technology was felt. As the economy restructures, their jobs are at risk, and without retraining, their employability may diminish. Clearly, upgrading and retraining becomes a major new priority. Current estimates suggest that an employee may have to be retrained as many as 5 times in a working career.

There is a corollary to the baby boom phenomenon, and that is the decline of new entrants to the workforce as the crest of the wave passes by - the *"Baby Bust"*. Here also a new priority emerges. We cannot afford the "wastage" of drop-outs in the school and college years for this group.

In summary, adult education must respond to two emerging challenges in the next 20 years. It must meet and master the needs of the new information age. And it must adapt to an aging population in need of frequent retraining. It must also achieve higher success rates with the traditional 18 to 24 year old group.

Demographic Changes (1986-2001)

Non-senior Population



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 91-520

Adapting to Change: Principles of a New Agenda

"He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils".
Francis Bacon

In a recent series of meetings, the Minister of Education discussed future directions for adult education with members of the public, and with representatives of business, industry, labor and various community groups. The advice he received is reported in a recent publication: "Ministerial Consultation Meetings: Summary of Public Responses"*

In these consultation sessions, and in discussions with the adult education system, a number of common themes emerged. The principles which underlie these themes can be stated as follows:

- **Adult education is the key to our future economic security. It must play a major role in the province's economic diversification strategy.**
- **As adult education and retraining become more of a necessity for future employment, access must be provided more equitably to all groups and regions in the province.**
- **Adult education is one of the main bulwarks against erosion of our social and cultural heritage. We must reinforce this role.**
- **The ability of students to express themselves clearly and think independently is of critical importance.**
- **The highest priority must be given by all adult education institutions to reinforcing analytical, conceptual and reasoning skills.**
- **There must be an expanded focus on the needs of older workers for retraining. Education must become a lifelong endeavour.**
- **Adult illiteracy is a silent enemy in our midst. Its eradication must be made a national priority.**

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Implementing Change: A Two-Phase Process

Adapting to change of this magnitude cannot be accomplished overnight. Room must be left for dialogue within the system, further public consultations, and the development of new approaches not yet attempted.

Consequently, a two-phase process will be required. The first phase involves measures which can be taken immediately to begin the process of change. This document is intended to launch Phase I.

The second phase involves consideration of some broader issues, both philosophical and practical, which require further public debate to reach a consensus. Some of these issues are discussed in the concluding section "*Toward the Year 2000*".

Phase I: Immediate Measures

The following seven sections detail the new measures which the government will implement, or ask third parties to implement, in the next twelve months.

SECTION A: A NEW APPROACH TO SKILL TRAINING

The purpose of skill training is to prepare for employment. The following initiatives will be implemented.

1. A NEW TECHNICAL INSTITUTE MODEL

To succeed, the technical institute of the future must be able to respond quickly to changing technologies and shifts in employment demand. It must work closely with business and industry. It must have the finances necessary to acquire state of the art excellence in new technologies. And it must incorporate the modern management and decision-making techniques that will enable it to act decisively and responsively.

In the fall of this year, the new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) will open its doors.

It will be created by merging the Saskatchewan Technical Institute and the Coteau Range Community College in Moose Jaw; Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences and the Regina Plains Community College in Regina; Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Advanced Technology Training Centre and the Saskatoon Region Community College in Saskatoon; and the Northern Institute of Technology, Prince Albert Regional Community College and the Meadow Lake Vocational Centre.

The new institute will operate autonomously from government, reporting to a Board of Directors. Program specialities will be established on each campus.

SIAST will be managed, in part, using modern private sector management techniques. The institute will be expected to cover a portion of its operating costs from private sector training contracts. It will be required to operate annually on a break-even basis, and to invest a percentage of annual income in new technology, applied research and development. The budget of the new institute will be approximately $60M.

2. CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY

The province will shortly **conclude a major new $160M, 3-year training agreement** with the federal government under the terms of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. A separate announcement on this agreement will be forthcoming in the immediate future.

3. LIFELONG LEARNING

Beginning in the fall of 1987 when the new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology opens, **a special task force will be set up to redesign skill training programs to accommodate older workers**. The following measures will be involved:

- redesign of curriculum to match the needs of adult learners in the work force
- investigation of potential financing arrangements with both employers and employees, and
- special retraining initiatives in areas of the economy under immediate pressure, including farming and resource industries.

The special task force will be required to present recommendations for action to the Minister and the Board of Directors of the Institute by December 1987.

4. CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

Business and industry across the province have expressed strong support for co-operative education. Through this mechanism, employers undertake to provide on-the-job training to students enrolled in formal courses of study. This approach is viewed by all parties as an ideal, practical approach.

The province recently concluded an agreement with the federal government to cost-share a major co-op education project in Moose Jaw. The province is committed to expanding this form of training.

5. APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is still the primary, mechanism by which industry and government co-operate to produce skilled trades workers.

Apprentices are trained on the worksite by skilled journeymen. This multi-year program provides practical training, technical knowledge and the development of appropriate work attitudes through classroom and on-the-job training.

Federal and provincial spending approximates nearly $6 million for the training and upgrading of apprentices and journeymen. More than 3,000 apprentices are trained annually in the province in 32 various trades.

While apprenticeship remains a valued form of training for employment, it is evident that the onset of technology poses some challenges. In an environment where changes in equipment occur frequently, a training system based on a set time period may have difficulty responding quickly enough.

To ensure that apprenticeship remains an important part of the skill training system, **the province and the federal government will co-operate with industry in a joint study of the program.**

The province will also:

- develop alternative training methods and new delivery systems for apprenticeship,

- expand opportunities for natives and Northerners to have access to apprenticeship training, and

- actively facilitate the involvement of women in trades and technical skill development.

SECTION B: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITIES

Universities occupy a special place in society. They are required to maintain uncompromising standards and to uphold the tradition of disinterested inquiry. They are both a repository of accumulated wisdom, and a source of inspiration for the new discoveries that will shape our future.

The universities also bear a special burden. Operating autonomously from government, but dependent largely on government funding, their situation is inherently ambiguous. They must contend with ever-growing public demand for more services, and with significantly differing public views about how, and to whom, these services should be delivered.

Since the start of the decade, universities across the country have reacted to these pressures by greatly increasing the intake of students and attempting to expand overall capacity. Governments have reacted by trying to keep up with ever-growing demands for more money.

Thus, in Saskatchewan, enrollment has risen 35 % since 1980. And government funding has been increased by more than 60%. The percentage of gross provincial product committed to university funding has also been increased significantly in recent years, despite mounting pressures in other sectors.

In purely objective terms, this is a record of accomplishment in which all might take pride. More students are being taught, more courses offered, more money provided, than at any time in our history.

Yet in subjective terms, the prevailing outlook on campuses across the country is more negative than positive. The struggle to meet society's ever-widening expectations has left many professors and administrators with a sense of frustration rather than satisfaction. The very open-endedness of our standards has deprived us of a meaningful sense of accomplishment.

It seems clear that an effort must be made to re-create a shared understanding among all parties of the role and responsibilities of the universities. This will not be accomplished overnight. But a start has already been made.

The *"Issues and Options"* project at the University of Saskatchewan is an important step towards this objective. The University of Regina is undertaking an academic review of its offerings and this process also will contribute to the dialogue that is required. The government wishes to commend both universities for these initiatives.

It should not be thought that such an exercise is necessarily limiting or restraining. There is also room for growth and renewal. For example, the government wishes to open discussions with the University of Regina and Luther College **toward establishing a new Trade Language Centre.** The government is also interested in discussing with the University of Saskatchewan, **a proposal to establish a new research institute in the field of agricultural commodities.**

What is important is that a dialogue occur in an open and constructive environment. Despite the many frustrations that beset our universities, a sense of balance remains important on all sides.

To give focus to this discussion of the role of the universities, Saskatchewan has agreed **to host a National Forum on Post-Secondary Education in October 1987.** This forum will provide an opportunity for a province-wide, and indeed national dialogue on the future direction of our universities.

SECTION C: COMMUNITY OUTREACH POLICY

The strongest message received in the Minister's Consultation Meetings was that people want greater access to adult education in or near their own communities.

There already exists a number of mechanisms to deliver extension programming:

- The community colleges broker programming from both universities and the technical institutes.
- The Saskatchewan Tele-Learning Association (STELLA) has been set up by representatives of the universities, community colleges, institutes and other organizations to investigate the new communication technologies such as satellites, fibre optics and cable.
- The University of Saskatchewan has begun providing the first two years of Arts and Sciences in Prince Albert and will soon be providing the same service to North Battleford and Yorkton.
- The University of Regina has been co-operating with SaskTel in using SaskTel's fibre optic network to deliver programming to Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Weyburn and Estevan, and
- A number of universities based outside the province also offer credit courses in selected communities.

While each of these initiatives meets a demand, there is a danger of creating a patchwork development, in which classes are offered in a piecemeal fashion. This creates inconsistency in quality and credibility of programs from community to community, and students find it difficult to plan their courses of studies more than a year ahead.

Objectives of a New Community Extension Policy

The objectives of a new policy on community extension should be:

- to provide greater access to adult education and training, in a more organized manner, for people living outside major urban centers,
- to provide a standardized offering of first and second year university Arts and Science courses on an extension basis, and
- to increase the provision of institute certificate programs on an extension basis.

To pursue these objectives, the government will take the following initiatives:

1. THE NEW REGIONAL COLLEGE MANDATE

The government proposes to transform the 8 rural community colleges in the south into Regional Colleges.* The new mandate of the Regional Colleges will be to offer university and institute programs on an extension, brokerage basis, across the province. The colleges will continue to provide adult literacy training, but will be asked to transfer community interest and

**Note: The role of the northern colleges is discussed in the Northern Education section E 4.*

personal "hobby" courses to volunteer organizations or to other community groups. The boundaries of the new colleges will be redrawn to cover the whole of southern Saskatchewan.

In effect, this new mandate builds on developments already occurring, but adds more focus and specificity to the role of the college system. With this new mandate, regional colleges will become the frontline delivery system for adult education and skill training outside the major urban centres.

2. EDUCATION OUTREACH FUND

The government **will establish a new $3M Education Outreach Fund to provide the resources needed to offer university and institute courses in smaller centers**. The fund will assist in the purchase of library materials, equipment, satellite and cable rentals, and associated materials and services.

3. DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNCIL

As indicated above, a number of organizations are already active in this field. These include the Extension Departments of both universities, the Correspondence School, STELLA, the Saskatchewan Library, and the regional colleges and technical nstitutes. There are also corporate actors in the field, including Sask Tel, and private firms.

To co-ordinate the new education outreach initiative, **the Minister of Education will appoint a Distance Education Council.** The Council will advise the Minister on the development of the new network of facilities and programs. It will also be asked to develop a policy on electronic distance education.

A new fee structure may be required to make the outreach policy affordable. One of the main limitations in providing courses off campus has been the high cost per student associated with smaller class sizes, and travel expenses for instructors. **Since an education outreach policy has the potential to save students travel and lodging expenses, a revision in the fee structure may be justified.**

The government will also discuss with the universities **the feasibility of developing a first and second year Arts and Science curriculum that is common to both universities**. This will greatly assist students in gaining entry to upper year courses at either university.

SECTION D: ADULT LITERACY CAMPAIGN

One in four adults in the province has less than Grade 9 education and Saskatchewan exceeds the national average for functional illiteracy in adults.

The situation has far-reaching implications. People with less than Grade 9 schooling often cannot meet the minimum entry requirements for employment. Even training and upgrading programs may demand higher qualifications than they possess. With the move towards an information-based economy, the situation can only worsen.

While literacy programs are currently offered in Saskatchewan, it is estimated that they reach only a small minority of potential beneficiaries. There are a number of reasons for this:

- It is difficult to reach illiterate adults through the usual community channels.
- Many adults with less than Grade 9 left school because they disliked the environment. They tend not to return to institutions associated with past failure.
- The sheer size of the problem is daunting. Over 160,000 adults are estimated to have less than Grade 9. This is four times the total enrollment in our universities and technical institutes.

It is evident that prompt and effective action must be taken immediately if this problem is to be overcome. The government proposes to take the following initiatives:

1. CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLITERACY

The Minister of Education will launch a province-wide volunteer campaign against adult illiteracy. **A Literacy Council will be established to co-ordinate and fight this campaign** with the assistance of volunteers across the province.

The Minister will also advocate a National Campaign Against Adult Illiteracy in discussions with his federal and provincial counterparts.

2. REDUCTION IN SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATES

Prevention is as important as cure. The province **will ask for an increased effort by school boards to reduce high school drop-out rates**. Several initiatives are already under way with support from the Education Development Fund.

3. REGIONAL COLLEGE INITIATIVES

As discussed above, adult literacy training will be an important part of the mandate of the new Regional Colleges.

SECTION E: EDUCATION EQUITY - OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUAL ACCESS

Any form of inequality resulting from stigma, discrimination or attitudinal stereotyping is indefensible. But inequality of opportunity in the field of education, itself the inspiration of all our freedoms, is intolerable.

The government will take the following measures to afford more equitable access to adult education.

1. WOMEN

While under-representation of women in adult education takes a number of forms, the province wishes to take immediate action in three of the most critical areas:

a) Women in Management

Women are significantly under-represented in management positions within adult education. Of the more than 30 publicly funded adult education institutions in Saskatchewan, none are headed by women. The situation is little better in the middle-management ranks. While this is clearly not a problem unique to adult education, the teaching profession suffers no shortage of qualified women. They simply do not advance in proportion to their numbers.

Until recently a similar situation existed within the Department of Advanced Education (now part of the Department of Education). A policy decision was taken to rectify the situation, and 50% of the senior management are now women. While the situation is not yet appropriately balanced throughout the department, it is clear that rapid improvement is possible.

The province will ask all publicly-funded adult education institutions **to develop proposals for appointing women to management positions**. A provincial conference will be held in February 1988, to follow up on the role of women managing education. If required, the province will ask the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to approve a formal education equity plan.

b) Women in Non-Traditional Fields

Special efforts will be made **to increase the representation of women in non-traditional professions and trades.** The new Saskatchewan Insititute of Applied Science and Technology will be asked to submit a training and employment equity plan.

c) Single Mothers

A major problem for women has been the financial difficulty facing single mothers. To assist this group, **single parents are now eligible for additional financial assistance under the new Special Incentives component of Student Aid.**

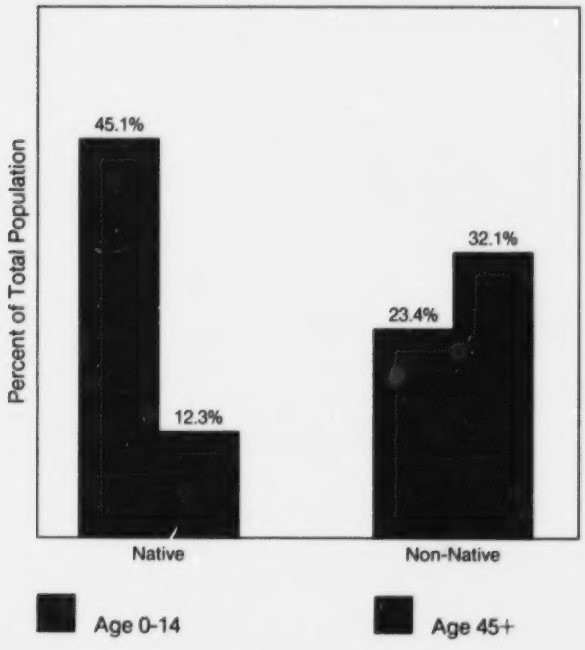
2. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In the education field, the problems facing disabled students go beyond merely gaining physical access to building and classrooms. Students with impaired hearing and sight face a special challenge in gaining access to information that is rarely tailored to their need. The government wishes to commend the University of Saskatchewan for a recent initiative to **offer special assistance to hearing and sight impaired students. Consideration is being given to introducing this approach on a province-wide basis.** Efforts will also be made to ensure that over time, all adult education facilities are made physically accessible to disabled students.

3. NATIVE EDUCATION

In many respects, the articulation of a successful native education policy is the greatest challenge facing government, educators, and native leaders, in Saskatchewan. And the challenge is growing. Almost 50% of the native population is under 15 years of age. By 1990, 25% of all new entrants to the labor force will be of native ancestry.

Native and Non-Native Populations
Compared by Selected Age Groups



Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census.

In broad terms, two different approaches have been used to date for improving the participation of native people. First, efforts have been made to bring native students into the existing adult education system. Where this has succeeded, it has primarily been due to the special efforts of strong, local leadership. But overall, while enrollment and retention levels are up, this approach is in danger of being too little, too late.

Second, funding has been provided to native-controlled institutions to set up separate programs. Gabriel Dumont Institute is one such example. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College at the University of Regina, and the Saskatchewan Indian Community College, are examples of Treaty Indian controlled institutions.

While this approach has also enjoyed some notable successes, it is questionable whether it offers a total solution. It may not be possible to accommodate in this manner, the numbers of native students who will require access to adult education by the year 2000.

The province wishes to discuss a new concept with native leaders. The province **will propose that there be joint native ownership and management of the new Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.** This will be accomplished by establishing a Native Studies Division of the new institute, on an equal basis with the other program divisions. Native representatives would be appointed to the Board of Directors. By this mechanism, not only can native programs be delivered by native people, but native people will also have a say for the first time in the running of the entire institute.

We believe this proposal breaks important new ground in native education by creating a partnership of equals. **If this approach is successful, the province will consider expanding it to other parts of the adult education system.**

4. NORTHERN EDUCATION

Difficulties similar to those discussed above exist also in the North. Economic under-development, geographic isolation and erosion of traditional lifestyles have also complicated the task.

As a first step, a redefinition of the relationship between the K-12 system and adult education is needed. A considerable portion of the resources committed to adult education in the North is used to provide remedial training for students under the age of 21 who have left the high school system. **The province will seek further discussions with educators in the North on this issue.**

While the provision of basic literacy and skills remains a priority, new emphasis on employment-directed training is required, encompassing apprenticeship, vocational training, and professional careers. More training is also required to assist northern people who wish to engage in local enterprises and traditional occupations. To make possible this new emphasis, **the government will consolidate the facilities and operations of the three northern community colleges in a new Northlands Career College.** The new college will retain campuses in the existing locations, but will be managed by one administration reporting to a consolidated Board of Governors. Savings from the streamlining of administration will be channelled into new programming.

The new Northlands Career College will offer the following services:

- University Extension for the provision of professional, paraprofessional and academic credit programming to second year level,
- Vocational-Technical training through outreach institute programs on a brokerage basis,
- Adult Literacy Training to provide academic upgrading,
- Enterprise Assistance to provide specialized training to northern businesses, and
- Career Services to offer counselling and associated services.

SECTION F: FINANCING ADULT EDUCATION

1. THE NEED FOR A REVISED FEE POLICY

Adult education is currently financed largely by direct government funding, supplemented by student fees. No defined policy has existed in recent times with respect to the appropriate contribution an individual should make toward the cost of his or her education.

One consequence of this lack of a defined policy has been a gradual decline in the percentage of the cost of adult education borne by students. Twenty years ago, tuition fees at the University of Saskatchewan accounted for about 25% of operating costs. Today, they account for only 15%. Fees at the technical institutes represent only 4% of operating costs, the lowest in the country.

It is questionable whether this erosion of fee structures is in anyone's long-term interests. It deprives institutions of a much needed source of direct income, and it tends to create a misleading impression of the true cost of education.

As a first step, **universities, institutes and colleges must attempt to build up other sources of direct income, such as corporate and public donations.**

However, if continuing demands for increased service are to be met, it appears inevitable that fees will have to be held to some fixed percentage of costs. The government has asked both universities to study this issue.

2. NEW APPROACHES TO FINANCING ADULT EDUCATION

A number of recent federal studies have concluded that new approaches to financing adult education and training will be required in the future.

The province **is interested in exploring with the federal government a long-term, insurance-based mechanism to fund future retraining needs**. The province is also interested in exploring such a mechanism with employers and workers.

Tax incentives may also afford a mechanism whereby both employers and employees can make provision for future retraining. The province is also prepared to consider this approach.

3. STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Historically, student financial assistance has been provided through a system of loans and bursaries. The federal government provides loans, while the province supplements this assistance through a loan and bursary mix. Over the past year, the Government of Saskatchewan has added a number of enhancements to the student financial assistance program;

- The new *Saskatchewan Supplementary Loan Program* provides students with up to $3,000 in additional loan assistance,
- Single parents are now eligible for additional assistance and loan remission under the *Special Incentives Program*, and
- The *Interest Write Down Program* provides low interest loans at 6% for 3 years.

As a result of these new measures, $87M of assistance has been provided to students since May 1, 1986, 50% from the provincial government and 50% from the federal government.

These additional benefits have greatly assisted more students to pursue adult education. Loan and bursary approvals are up 40% over last year. However, a side effect of these changes has been to create a complex system of criteria and conditions. There are now six different programs, each with their own criteria.

Consequently, **the government will act to consolidate the student aid system into two programs: Canada Student Loans and Saskatchewan Student Loans. The level of support will be maintained, but criteria will be standardized to simplify the program.**

Bursaries will still be provided by the province, but in the form of a refundable loan. The bursary portion will be refunded upon proof of successful completion of the course of study.

SECTION G: MANAGING ADULT EDUCATION

As indicated above, the last 15 years have been a period of rapid growth in the availability, and cost, of adult education in Canada. Now, with the present reality of declining revenues and mounting government deficits, further funding increases seem unlikely in the short term. It is clear that a joint management strategy is needed, in which each party gives, and receives, a clearer understanding of what it expects of the other.

For its part, **the government must define its policy objectives and provide a longer-term financial planning horizon.** In turn, the adult education system must define realistic targets within this financial framework, and adopt the management strategy necessary to achieve these.

This document attempts **to provide the framework within which government will pursue its policy objectives for the next five years.** The Minister of Finance's Economic and Financial Report in March 1987, offers a financial planning framework.

Adult education institutions have already begun the process of shaping management strategies. The Issues and Options project at the University of Saskatchewan, the academic review of course offerings at the University of Regina, and the Saskatchewan Community Colleges Trustees' Association Report are all important steps in this direction.

To provide a focus for the process, the Minister of Education will convene a two-day conference in September 1987, for participants in the adult education system. The objective will be to seek a clearer definition of mutually agreed upon rules and mandates for each institution. Conclusions drawn from this conference will form part of the province's contribution to the National Forum on Post Secondary Education in Saskatoon in October.

Phase II: Toward the Year 2000

The measures described above will begin the process of change. They deal largely with issues or programs internal to the adult education system itself.

However, there are a number of broader, in some cases external, issues which also require resolution. These include issues specific to the K-12 system for example, or to the workplace, on which a public consensus has not yet emerged.

These issues represent signposts that will point the way for us as we reach some of the major crossroads along the way. It is important to arrive at agreement on them if we are to design our adult education system the way we want it.

A brief sketch of some of these issues is provided below. The Minister of Education will be initiating a public dialogue on these topics in the months ahead.

Admissions and Enrollment Policy

Between the ages of 5 and 21, the law requires that all residents of the province shall have unrestricted access to the K-12 system. What should the policy be for access to publicly-funded adult education institutions?

While there are a number of separate issues involved in this question, two in particular must be resolved:

As a matter of policy, should admission to some institutions, in particular universities, be restricted to those possessing academic qualifications of a certain standard? If so, what is the appropriate standard?

As a matter of necessity, if public demand at an institution exceeds capacity, how should spaces be allocated? Is academic standing the appropriate criterion? Should other considerations be taken into account, including assured access for under-represented groups?

Province-Wide Standards

There is a perception in the general public that our education system under-emphasizes analytical, linguistic and conceptual skills. This is felt to be true of both the K-12 and the adult education system. There is also a concern that standards vary considerably between institutions. Finally, there is concern within the universities that students graduating from Grade 12 often lack some of the skills necessary to succeed in university. Considerable effort is being diverted to remedial teaching.

To deal with these problems, some jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have introduced common exams at the Grade 12 level. Others have introduced entrance exams at the universities. Some have gone so far as to institute exams for teachers.

Should Saskatchewan introduce any of these measures? If not, by what other means can a common, acceptable standard of academic achievement be reached?

Inter-Provincial Co-operation

There may be some potential for adult education institutions across the country to concentrate resources by sharing facilities. In effect, some of the higher-cost programs are offered only at designated campuses, and students from other jurisdictions are accepted on an exchange basis.

While arrangements of this kind already exist - the Veterinary Sciences Program at the University of Saskatchewan is an example - they are the exception. Should this model be pursued more actively?

Adult Literacy

As indicated above, the problem of adult functional illiteracy may well become one of the major social issues of the 21st century. The impact of new technology can only exacerbate the situation.

At present, there is a tendency to treat adult illiteracy remedially; that is, to treat the symptoms as and where possible, without questioning their origins. But if the problem is to be dealt with adequately, greater co-ordination between the K-12 system and the adult education system is urgently required.

It is vital that society come to grips with the origins of this problem, and with the measures that will be required to overcome it.

Conclusion

As indicated above, **the Minister of Education will be initiating a public dialogue** on these and related issues in the months ahead. **Background issue papers will be released on some of these topics shortly, to begin the process of discussion.**

It is hoped that through a broad public scrutiny of the issues, we will find our way to solutions that all can support.